

## Daniel Cady Eaton.

GEORGE E. DAVENPORT.

WITH PORTRAIT; PLATE XXVI A.

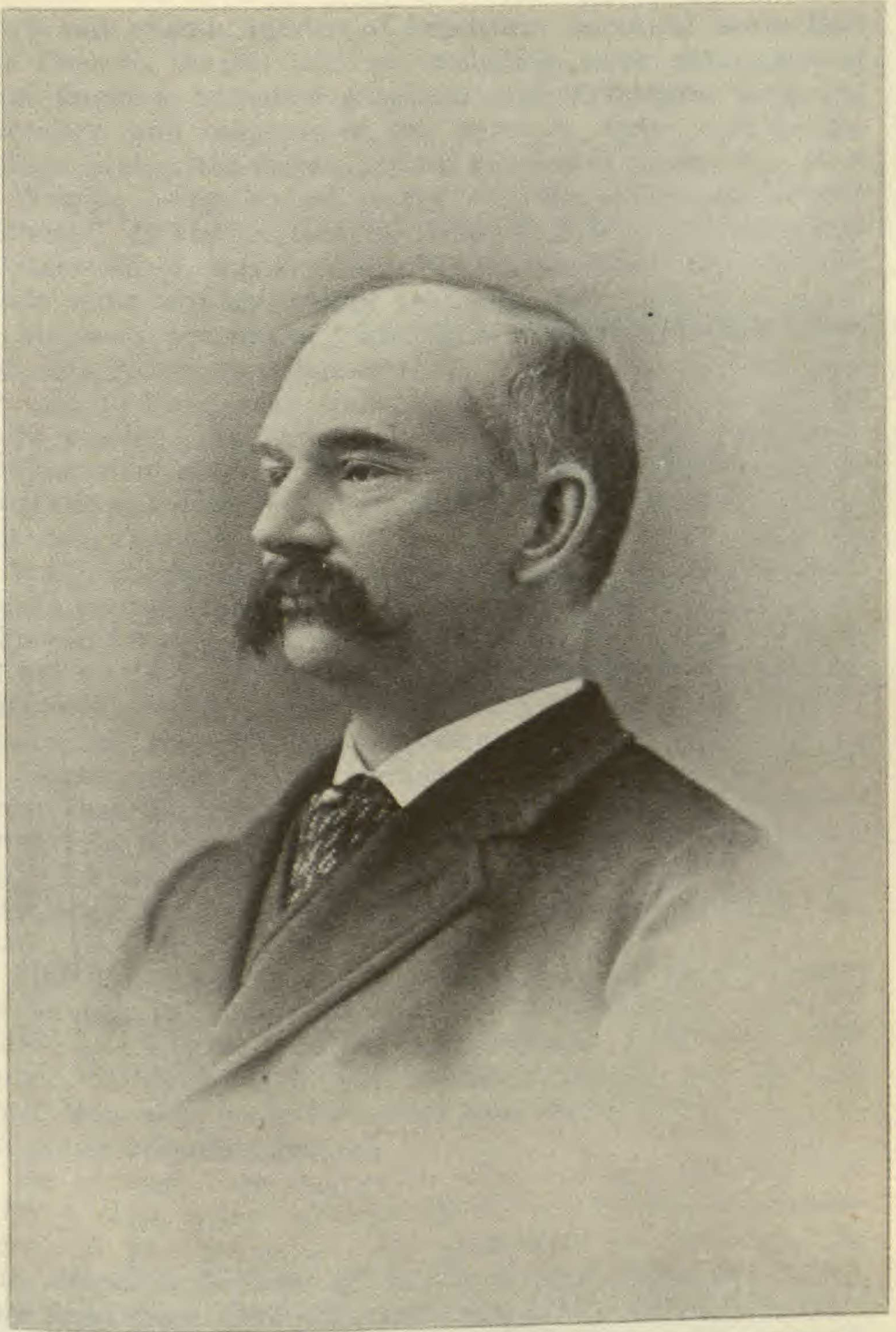
The death of this eminent pteridologist, who has been for so many years our leading authority on the ferns, will be felt most keenly by all who love those beautiful plants with which his name has been so long associated that we cannot think of them without thinking of him, and it will be a long time, a very long time before we become reconciled, if we ever do, to his loss.

There are always some with whom one does not like to associate thoughts of death. The places which they fill and adorn seem to be so essential to the good and happiness of others that we wish to think of them as being always with us, an ever living presence. But when the sudden taking away of such awakens us, however rudely, from this dream, and when the shock of the blow which stuns for the moment passes away, we happily find that we are left with the heritage of a memory sweeter and more precious far than even the living presence, and with a richer benediction that is immortal in its influence. Among such we can always think of Prof. Eaton as a conspicuous example.

Charles C. Frost, of Brattleboro Vt., who made his name famous as a botanist while working at his trade as a shoemaker, once told a friend of the writer that Prof. Eaton first had his attention called to the ferns during a woodland stroll by the young lady to whom he was engaged, and who subsequently became his wife; and that the desire to aid her led to his becoming so much interested in the ferns as to make of their study the specialty which has given to his name the reputation it has since borne. If this be true, we owe to her an everlasting debt of gratitude, and our hearts will go out to her with stronger and deeper sympathy in the great sorrow which has come to her now.

It is certain, however, that Prof. Eaton must have inherited a love for botany. His grandfather, Prof. Amos Eaton, of the Rensselaer Institute, Troy, N. Y., was one of the pioneers of American botany. He published between the years





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1816 and 1840 a number of important botanical works that ran through several editions, including some catalogues of local floras, a botanical grammar and dictionary, botanical exercises, and manuals of the northern states, and of the United States, the latter, revised in 1840 in conjunction with J. Wright, being known as the "eighth edition of Eaton's Manual." His father, General Amos B. Eaton, a distinguished military officer, was also interested in scientific pursuits, and made some fern collections that were subsequently included in his son's account of "The ferns of the southwest," published in Wheeler's report in 1878. So that Prof. Eaton may be said to have been well equipped by inheritance for the work which he had undertaken to do. That he rendered a good account of the talents thus entrusted to him is evident from the splendid record which he has left for others to admire and emulate.

It is probably not generally known that Prof. Eaton had a cousin younger than himself, bearing precisely the same name, who was for some years professor of the history and criticism of art at Yale. In consequence of this fact the two professors have sometimes been confused. It is probably for this reason that the erroneous statement of his having been born in Johnstown, N. Y., has been published, as well as the statement that his name appears on the Yale "roll of honor" as private in the seventh New York regiment, although he did serve for several years as inspector of stores at New York city in the United States commissary department during the war.

Prof. Eaton was, however, born at Fort Gratiot, Michigan, September 12, 1834, and was the son of General Amos B. Eaton and Elizabeth Selden, of Rochester, New York. His father distinguished himself in the Seminole and Mexican wars, becoming major by brevet after Buena Vista, and subsequently brigadier-general.

He entered Yale College in 1853, and graduated in 1857 with a class noted subsequently for its distinguished members. A year previous to his graduation he contributed to the *American Journal of Science* a short paper on "Three new ferns from California and Oregon." Immediately after graduation he entered Harvard as a member of the Lawrence Scientific School, where he began the systematic study of botany under Prof. Asa Gray.



Here was formed that intimacy and friendship between two kindred natures which continued without interruption until the death of Dr. Gray, and which led him to dedicate to his revered instructor and friend, his magnificent work on "The Ferns of the United States of America and British North American Possessions," published in 1879-80.

In 1860 Prof. Eaton received the degree of bachelor of science from Harvard, and in 1864 he was elected professor of botany at Yale, with duties chiefly in the Sheffield Scientific School, where he remained until his death.

Previous to this time he had published papers on the ferns of Japan, and eastern Cuba, and contributed the chapter on Filices to Chapman's "Flora of the southern United States." During the thirty-one years of his professorship at Yale he published more than sixty papers, mostly on the ferns, mosses and algæ, with an occasional diversion, as in his "Vegetable fibres in an oriole's nest;" "Tea, coffee, and chocolate; their nature and their effects;" and his botanical definitions in Webster's "International dictionary."

In 1867 he elaborated the ferns for the fifth edition of Gray's "Manual of the botany of the northern United States," and the "acrogens" for Gray's "Field, forest and garden botany" a year later, continuing the revisions through all subsequent editions of those works to the present time.

Two of his most important works of this period were his report on the Compositæ in Watson's "Report on the botany of the geological survey of the fortieth parallel under Clarence King," published in 1871, and his splendid elaboration of the ferns for Lieut. Wheeler's "Report on the United States geological surveys west of the 100th meridian," published in 1878. It was in this latter work that *Notholæna Hookeri* was elevated to specific rank and dedicated to Dr. Hooker who had previously treated it as a variety of *N. candida* under the name of *fido-palmata*. The entire scope of this elaboration was broadened so as to include all the ferns known to have been collected west of the 100th degree of longitude, and south of the 40th degree of north latitude, under the head of the "Ferns of the southwest."

This work was supplemented later on by an elaboration of the vascular cryptogams for the "Botany of California" published in two volumes under the direction of Sereno Watson. One of the writer's botanical treasures is a nearly complete